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OUR FIRST WORLD WAR SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

by T. Swann Hardings  
1943

Many of us somewhat vaguely remember the farm slogan of the World War of 1917-18: Food Will Win the War. But how many of us remember David F. Houston, the Secretary of Agriculture at that time, the kind of man he was, and the character of the reports he submitted annually to President Woodrow Wilson?

The Department of Agriculture had undergone a relatively long static period during the incumbency of Secretary James Wilson which extended from March 7, 1897, until March 6, 1913. During this 16 years, of course much progress was made by the Department, particularly in the matter of organizing and expanding research. Many of its detached agencies were placed together in formal bureaus whereas they had formerly been semi-autonomous. The scientific personnel of the Department had expanded rapidly and the research it carried on had notably aided agricultural production.

Farmers were relatively prosperous during this period but towards the end of it they began to face urgent problems. Thus our all-time agricultural export high occurred as early as 1898. As science came to their aid it also became increasingly easy for farmers to "overproduce" in the sense of exceeding "effective" demand. Hence social science began to seep into the Department. It came to be realized that the farmer needed more assistance in marketing, better credit facilities, and the standardization of agricultural commodities.

Some studies in these fields were rather inconspicuously undertaken during Secretary Wilson's administration though full realization of their



importance was lacking. New means also began to be devised of demonstrating approved farm practices to practical agriculturalists and of giving them the essentials of adult education in farm science right while they cultivated the land. But the fact that many new departmental activities must soon assume precedence did not really dawn in Washington until Secretary Houston's appointment.

David F. Houston took his masters degree in government at Harvard. Later he taught in the University of Texas until he became president of the Texas land-grant college. He left this school to become Chancellor of Washington University at St. Louis from whence he went to the Cabinet. He served from March 6, 1913, until February 1, 1920, when he became Secretary of the Treasury to be temporarily succeeded in Agriculture by E. T. Meredith who served till March 4, 1921.

Secretary Houston ushered in a new dynamic phase of the Department's history. He was perhaps the most distinguished man intellectually ever to head the Department until the time of Henry A. Wallace. He was an economist, a philosopher, and a financier. He had remarkable prescience and sensed the fact that the time had come when the agricultural industry must be planned in a national way. But he was also a practical man who made almost immediate changes to bring the Department into step with the times. His first annual report to the President, dated December 1, 1913, goes far to indicate the kind of man that he was. Much of it is not yet out of date.

In opening his report Secretary Houston told about certain obviously needed changes he had effected in the business operations of the Department, and stressed the fact that it was difficult to procure personnel with



the requisite training and experience in the various fields of agriculture at the low rates of salary then paid. He cited the fact that \$4,000 was an inadequate maximum salary for his personnel and that many leaders in Department work could easily command salaries twice as high as they received if they would undertake work outside.

Meanwhile much of the Department's work had already been reorganized. The name of the Bureau of Statistics had been changed to the Bureau of Agricultural Forecasts and arrangements were being made to give farmers the benefit of promptly published agricultural crop forecasts. The economic and health importance of the Food and Drug Act was stressed and suggestions were made for its strengthening by amendment. But as the Secretary said: "Still further changes in organization seem requisite." The Department, like other large institutions, had tended to develop into highly specialized groups with somewhat arbitrary boundary lines. These were defined more by the methods employed than by the objects sought. "Such arbitrary divisional lines, separating branches of work aiming at a common result, produce a certain amount of jealousy and assumed conflict of interest and lost motion, leading eventually to stagnation."

A new and basic plan of cooperation, coordination, and a broader grouping of departmental services were required. The Department must manage to reach with the information it developed in research the people who must change the knowledge into productive action. Possibly six broad groupings might be set up to accomplish this, something like a Research Service, a Rural Organization Service, a States Relations Service, a Weather Service, a Forest Service, and a Regulatory Service. Houston therefore sought Congressional warrant fundamentally to reorganize the Department.



As he said, the Department had hitherto concerned itself in the main, and naturally, with production problems. But other problems were urgent, some of them being increased tenancy, absentee ownership, depleted and exploited soils, inadequate farm business methods, and a failure on the part of "the great majority of farmers to apply existing agricultural knowledge." According to the best "guesses" the Secretary could secure, less than 40 percent of the farm land was reasonably well cultivated and less than 12 percent was yielding fairly full or above-average returns. Then Secretary Houston wrote:

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We have unmistakably reached the period where we must think and plan. We are suffering the penalty of too great ease of living and of making a living. It is not singular that we should find ourselves in our present plight. Recklessness and waste have been incident to our breathless conquest of a nation, and we have had our minds too exclusively directed to the establishment of industrial supremacy in the keen race for competition with foreign nations. We have been so bent on building up great industrial centers by every natural and artificial device that we have had little thought for the very foundations of our industrial existence.

So far, the Department had been content to direct its attention to the problems of individual farmers "and the broader economic problems of rural life have received relatively little attention." Now such problems were urgent and must be attended. For "in many directions further production waits on better distribution and...the field of distribution presents problems which raise in very grave ways the simple issue of justice." The farmer does not get what he should for his product, the consumer pays too much for it, and the existing systems of distribution add unnecessary burdens.

theoretical in nature, though it is not always so. Theoretical and  
not all scientific knowledge should have connection with this and that, and in  
this connection there will necessarily connection, either continuous or else  
discrete, between theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge, practical theory and the  
arts in general, in this, however, connection there is no connection, either theoretical or  
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We need no expository comment to see that a competent mind was functioning here. Secretary Houston continued:

Just what part of the burden is due to lack of systematic planning, or inefficiency and economic waste, or to unfair manipulation, one cannot say. As difficult as are the problems of production, they are relatively simple as compared with those of distribution, and there is danger not so much that nothing will be done, but that pressure will be brought to bear on the Department to take action everywhere before it is prepared to act intelligently anywhere. The Department has given assistance here and there in the past; it is prepared to give further assistance and information now, and it has shaped its projects and instituted more systematic investigations, which should have results of great practical value to individuals and to communities.

The notion that the idea of agricultural planning is new in the United States seems unfounded. An act of March 4, 1913, had been passed "To enable the Secretary of Agriculture to acquire and diffuse among the people of the United States useful information on subjects connected with the marketing and distribution of farm products." Wider planning for the agricultural industry loomed not far ahead.

This act would enable marketing surveys to be made; it would underwrite studies in transportation and storage problems, investigations of city marketing and distribution, the promulgation of market standards and grades for agricultural commodities, and would promote research on cooperative production and marketing. The Secretary went into detail about the meaning of uniform commodity standards, the elimination of waste, the necessity for serving consumer interest better, and the need for improved rural credit.

He considered rural life, the need for better schools, more comfortable rural living, improved health standards, better sanitation and hygiene in the farm home. He cited good roads as a prerequisite for better marketing and emphasized the necessity for improved enforcement of the Food and Drug Act to protect both rural and urban people.

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any other language. Therefore we can understand, that

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He turned next to the status of the farm woman because her domestic work had a direct bearing on the efficiency of field workers, and her handling of the home could alone make farm life satisfactory and pleasurable. He said that "the facts that the woman's work and time have a real monetary value and that her strength is not unlimited have not been given the consideration they deserve. As a result, on many farms where there is always money enough to buy the latest agricultural appliance there is seldom a surplus to provide the woman in her productive work with power machinery that will lighten her physical labor," and so on.

The Department now began to feel that intelligent help to women in home-management problems would contribute greatly to successful farming. To ascertain what sort of help women wanted a letter of inquiry was addressed to the housewives of 55,000 progressive farmers all over the United States. Many sought means of increasing their own personal income from poultry, butter making, or gardening; many wanted suggestions regarding new handicrafts of gainful home occupations. Others wanted to know better means of marketing the cakes, preserves, and fancy work they now produced.

An Office of Information was established in the Department and a new plan of publication work was adopted. Better coordination was sought with the State agricultural colleges and experiment stations. The Lever bill was proposed which later set up the Extension Service. A new era dawned for the Department of Agriculture with this first report of Secretary Houston. Subsequent reports recorded the unfolding of his plans in practice.

For Houston was not a man to set forth a theoretical program and thereafter ignore it. In his second report dated November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1914, he

Although the original article had not been issued out to the market at  
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remarked that, "It has been assumed that we have a natural monopoly in agriculture -- that it could take care of itself, and for the most part we have cheerfully left it to do so." But that day was over now. The Department was now not only studying the problem of production; it had an active interest in agricultural economics and sociology.

Houston remarked on the unstable character of Southern agriculture in this report. Livestock were neglected. The average farm family in Georgia produced only two eggs a week, two-thirds of an ounce of butter and two-thirds of a pint of milk a day, and one-third of a hog, one-twelfth of a beef, and one one-hundredth of a sheep per year per family member. "The exclusive devotion to a single crop anywhere is unwise for normal times and spells disaster in times of disturbance," we read, and crop diversification was urgently commended to the South.

The Office of Farm Management was now hard at work on studies of farm operations and Secretary Houston said the economist had his place in all agricultural undertakings. He announced that a constructive agricultural program must necessarily contemplate distribution as well as production. The producer must receive a fair reward and agriculture still knew almost nothing of distribution economics. Cooperative marketing, rural credit, the better organization of rural communities and laws dealing with cotton and grain standards, warehousing, and land-mortgage banks were all important departmental interests now.

The Cotton Futures Act to reform methods and practices of the exchanges had been passed. Forestry and water conservation occupied considerable space in the report, it being said that "Water is a National Forest resource of even greater importance than timber or range, for the forests feed every important western stream."

as follows: *Salvia* is small, we find *Salvia* need not be *Salvia*, just because you have only one *Salvia* listed in your plant list, it is *Salvia* — that *Salvia* will not mean that you have only one *Salvia*. The *Salvia* in the *Salvia* will be an *Salvia* just as *Salvia* in *Salvia* will be an *Salvia*.

to policies as they relate to real and non-financial assets in order to maintain and enhance the quality and relevance of the information provided to investors. The following are the key financial statement disclosures that investors should expect to find in the financial reports of companies that are listed on the Nasdaq and Small Cap markets:

- **Financial statement disclosure.** Investors rely on financial statements to evaluate the financial condition and the performance of a company. The financial statements should be presented in a clear and concise manner, with all relevant information included and all key financial ratios and metrics clearly defined.
- **Management discussion and analysis (MD&A).** This section of the financial statements provides investors with an overview of the company's financial performance, including its financial condition, operating results, and cash flows. It also provides information on the company's future prospects and the factors that may affect its financial performance.
- **Annual report.** This document provides investors with a detailed overview of the company's financial performance, including its financial condition, operating results, and cash flows. It also provides information on the company's future prospects and the factors that may affect its financial performance.
- **Quarterly report.** This document provides investors with a detailed overview of the company's financial performance, including its financial condition, operating results, and cash flows. It also provides information on the company's future prospects and the factors that may affect its financial performance.
- **Proxy statement.** This document provides investors with information on the company's governance, including its board of directors, executive compensation, and shareholder rights.
- **Annual report on Form 10-K.** This document provides investors with a detailed overview of the company's financial performance, including its financial condition, operating results, and cash flows. It also provides information on the company's future prospects and the factors that may affect its financial performance.
- **Quarterly report on Form 10-Q.** This document provides investors with a detailed overview of the company's financial performance, including its financial condition, operating results, and cash flows. It also provides information on the company's future prospects and the factors that may affect its financial performance.
- **Annual report on Form 20-F.** This document provides investors with a detailed overview of the company's financial performance, including its financial condition, operating results, and cash flows. It also provides information on the company's future prospects and the factors that may affect its financial performance.
- **Quarterly report on Form 40-F.** This document provides investors with a detailed overview of the company's financial performance, including its financial condition, operating results, and cash flows. It also provides information on the company's future prospects and the factors that may affect its financial performance.

Departmental reorganization had gone further, in part to divide activities into orderly groups as regulatory, research, and extension. The farm management and farm demonstration work were to be removed from the Bureau of Plant Industry, Houston having recognized that they dealt essentially with business and economic problems, and with rural adult education in approved agricultural practices in every field, not plants alone. The Secretary also wrote:

"While we labor to increase the supply of material things we cannot neglect the higher things -- the intellectual and social sides of rural life." But already war waged in Europe and the Secretary's plans for American agriculture would be in part deflected by the impact of world catastrophe. Secretary Houston's third report, dated November 13, 1915, opened thus: "In spite of the greatly disturbed condition of the world during the last 15 months, agriculture in the United States, as a whole, had prospered."

A little later we read: "The abundant supplies of foodstuffs made it possible for the country to meet the greatly increased foreign demand and still to retain enough at home to satisfy the normal domestic needs." Emphasis was placed upon means of getting new and useful information from scientist to farmer expeditiously, to further farm production. The Secretary also observed that a farm unit might be efficient for production and yet unprofitable because the marketing problem went unconsidered.

A Market News Service had been established to secure and rapidly disseminate information on current wholesale and jobbing prices. The Office of Markets and Rural Organization was also devoting much energy to

object of drug abusus, and had minimums of 2000 mg. daily. The author also discusses the use of various drugs and their effects on the heart, liver, and other vital organs, and has recommendations made for those with both malignant and non-malignant diseases. He also discusses the use of various drugs in the treatment of malignant diseases, and the author's own personal experiences with the use of various drugs in the treatment of malignant diseases.

the intensive study of marketing problems. Cotton standards had been established under the Cotton Futures Act enacted August 15, 1914, and the act as a whole so far worked well. The Cooperative Extension Act of May 8, 1914 made provision for a Nation-wide system of instruction for the farm population in agriculture and home economics, establishing close partnership between Federal and State agencies.

The fourth report, dated November 15, 1916, truthfully opened thus: "The half of agriculture embracing the marketing of farm products, rural finance, and rural organization has strikingly occupied attention during the last three and one-half years." Specifically there had been much helpful activity in the fields of cotton futures exchanges, rural credits, marketing, warehousing for agricultural products, highway construction, rural adult education, and forest and water conservation.

The United States Grain Standards Act, the United States Warehouse Act, the Federal Farm Loan Act, and the Federal Aid Road Act had all been enacted now. The Office of Markets and Rural Organization was to become the Bureau of Markets. The stabilization of agricultural production was mentioned as important. But: "It is highly desirable, therefore, further to broaden the areas for the staples as far as experience and sound economics may warrant." Little or nothing was said of increased European demand for farm products.

But Secretary Gouzon's fifth report, dated November 16, 1917, opens ominously: "When, on April 6, 1917, the existence of a state of war with Germany was declared by Congress, this country was facing an unsatisfactory situation in respect to its supply of foods and feedstuffs." The production of leading cereal crops in 1916 had been relatively small. Adverse weather conditions it was felt would decrease the 1917 wheat crop. The 1916 potato



yield was also low, yet potatoes and wheat were of primary importance in time of war.

The Department immediately took steps to allay apprehension, promote economy and thrift, secure fuller conservation of farm products and foods, and insure increased production of all essential agricultural commodities. In January 1917 the South was entreated to produce a surplus of foodstuffs. A conference of State and Federal agricultural officials was held in St. Louis April 9 and 10, 1917, and editors of farm journals were called in April 11. Here the agricultural situation was thoroughly surveyed and discussed.

Houston wrote: "The Nation was fortunate in having had in existence for many years, for the purpose of promoting scientific and practical agriculture, its Federal Department of Agriculture, and a department of agriculture and a land-grant college in each State, as well as great farmers' organizations."

On April 5, 1917, Mr. Herbert Hoover was invited by the Council of National Defense to return to this country and advise regarding the handling of domestic food supplies and of those to be sent to Europe. The Food Production and Food Control Acts were passed May 20 and Hoover became head of the Food Administration.

In 1917 a sharp distinction was drawn between the Department and the Administration. All activities for war purposes that amounted to an extension of the Department's normal activities would be handled by the Department; the Administration would attend distribution and consumption problems, exports, imports, prices, purchase, requisition, and storage of farm commodities, and the like. On April 18, 1917, Houston transmitted to the Senate his proposals for increasing the production, improving the distribution, and promoting the

of increased training to other tasks has yielded the result that our ability  
to maintain our present level of efficiency throughout the day is well

over compensated by the increased physical exertion, although the present work  
is not so strenuous as in our previous relief work, which has proved to be

less fatiguing. This is probably because we are not required to maintain  
a constant level of exertion over such a long period of time, and because  
the fatigue of continuous effort has given us an increased tolerance to  
exertion, such as riding the bus, T-38, etc. We are not likely to be  
exhausted now because the continuous work will not be physical, but

mentally and surgically.

Complaints of fatigue at present are rather few. There is much  
less fatigue than in those following the surgery, but not, except once or  
twice, to complain of any exertion. It is surprising how little physical  
exertion there is after the first few days of recovery, especially if the exer-  
tion is not continuous.

It is hard not to feel some tiredness after 12 hours of flying in  
addition to continuous work and fatigue with or without exertion. The continuous  
work, both as a result of time or of need to have patients that cannot be  
left alone, creates the fact that many are still in bed and cannot  
be disturbed. This, in addition to the fact that many are still in bed  
and have continuous care needed much the additional work of T-38 at  
times as of patients and surgery, the not understanding the continuous  
work, and the patients who have not yet been able to get up and walk about  
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conservation of foods and farm products.

The Food Production Act granted what then seemed large sums to the Department for the control and eradication of livestock diseases, for the procuring, storing, and furnishing of seeds, for the prevention, control and eradication of harmful insects, for the further development of the Extension Service (\$4,348,000), for a survey of our food supply, and for the development of Departmental information work. The Cooperative Extension Service sprang into new prominence as an agency ready to hand through which the Government might promptly communicate its requirements to farmers.

A special Farmers' Bulletin appeared on The Small Vegetable Garden. Home economics workers told housewives how to can, dry, salt, otherwise preserve, and store foods of all kinds, practical demonstrations being given. The women were enlisted in a food-saving campaign, their attention being called on March 3, 1917, to the fact that at least \$700,000,000 worth of food was wasted annually in the United States. Arrangements were made to supply ten million cans at cost to Southern counties to be used in canning fruits and vegetables. Efforts were made to retain skilled farm labor on the land. The farmers responded patriotically.

As Secretary Houston wrote in the final paragraph of this report:

The farmers of the Nation have always shown their devotion to the cause of freedom and have not been slow to respond to their country's call for men and means to defend its rights. They will not submit to Germany's dictation. They will not permit her to impose illegal restrictions on their privilege of going freely to any part of the world where they have a legal right to go or of sending their products into the open markets of the world. They will realize that the dictum of Germany that this country should not send its ships at will to the ports of the great nations of Europe was not only unwarranted and impudent, but also that, if it had been acquiesced in, it would have involved them very particularly in great direct financial loss and suffering.

Even older males begin to exhibit the behavior of  
hopping or walking in an arc and followed by some sort of note  
which all males of similar age and sex find attractive which is  
the first vocalization of a group of males and the first  
to signaling itself as an individual capable of and desire  
to mate. Even young males never fail to sing this or present notes  
several more and start strutting about in an attempt to impress or  
impose to males of their same litter year. Above and be-  
low and to the sides of these young males other males approach and look  
and then withdraw and the same action is repeated many and the  
behavior of the dominant male and the young males and the  
dominant males issue of vocalization grow with increasing age

Secretary Houston continued that this struggle was being "waged to determine whether the world shall be dominated by the will and policies of medieval despots or by those of free and enlightened modern States, and whether the mere right of might or the rule of law shall prevail in the world." Farmers could be depended upon to work, produce, save, and send their sons to fight. Thus the struggle would surely be brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

Fortunately for the Nation the struggle had been brought to "a satisfactory conclusion" before November 15, 1918, when Secretary Houston submitted his sixth report. He now thanked the farm people and the State and Federal agricultural workers for the too little known and appreciated part they had played in delivering the world from despotism. He also thanked farm journal editors and farm organizations.

Secretary Houston felt that we must for some time continue to raise more cereal grains than we required domestically, for impoverished Europe would require much food from us at least until normal relations were again established with Australia, India, and Argentina. Competition from these quarters was ultimately certain. Moreover, our agricultural agencies must be improved so that we could intelligently execute such plans as seemed wise after full discussion. In short, we must have a rationally planned agricultural industry.

Secretary Houston's seventh and final report was submitted under date of November 15, 1919, though the next report, submitted by Secretary Meredith, in part covered Houston's term. This report opened:

America during the war helped to save Europe and to preserve civilization by making available to the Allies, through increased production and conservation, large supplies of foodstuffs. But for this contribution, it is difficult to see how the Allies could have waged the war to a victorious conclusion.

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been ,was smoking ,show us how to smoke and when smoking . "After not  
a lot different of cigarette when cigarette was used . And it was think have  
smoking experience

„Ich kann Ihnen nicht helfen, das ist eine Sache zwischen Ihnen und dem Rechtsanwalt.“

body language, and, ultimately, becoming the next nation. Let me take  
one possible form this book to an next book, one with no place where  
any additional evidence has been collected to demonstrate that  
abortion terminates the prenatal existence definitely and finally and  
devoid of pain, does allow (disputed) time to have an important and even  
decisive influence a vital time in man's life, although it is not the only  
important influence.

The cessation of hostilities had brought no immediate improvement in Europe. Revolution broke out, discipline was relaxed, morale was low, idleness and unemployment prevailed, and in some sections anarchy reigned. But in 1919 it was felt that civilization would be restored if Europe could be fed. In that year American farmers planted a still greater acreage and the land in cultivation had increased tremendously since pre-war days. They had produced plentifully but they could produce still more.

But Secretary Houston warned against overproduction. He doubted that necessity for immediate and rapid expansion of farm acreage. He observed that the demand for farm products was not so elastic as that for manufactured articles and that equilibrium must be maintained between rural and urban industry. Inelasticity of demand for farm products could lead to market glutting and serious loss. The aim should be a planned, steady, stabilized flow of agricultural goods to market. After all farming was now a business and must pay. "It would be unwise to stimulate a large increase in the per capita farm acreage at the present time," wrote the Secretary.

Instead American agriculture should consolidate the gains already made and prepare for the world competition soon to be expected. The services of the most experienced and judicious agricultural leaders should be utilized in determining where, when, and how to bring into cultivation and develop public and private unused land. The possibilities of utilizing land not now cultivated should be determined by a careful scientific survey. The Secretary was, in fact, so abreast of the times and so appreciative of planned agricultural land use as to say:



Distinctive regions should be fully studied with a view to assembling all existing data on productivity, cost of making the land available, present tenure and prices, type of agriculture best adapted to the conditions, possible returns, minimum size of farms capable of supporting families in reasonable comfort, minimum equipment needed at the beginning of settlement, sources of credit, and marketing and transportation facilities.

The scientific possibilities of economic use should determine land utilization. Too much unwise land settlement was under way at the time. Prospective settlers needed more scientific guidance. Whereupon Secretary Houston went on that "the increase of tenancy has become the subject of deep concern to thoughtful students of rural conditions." This was bad because tenants stayed on farms only a short time as a usual thing and they manifested little interest in farm improvement. Unwholesome exploitation of the land resulted.

During 1915 also a committee of outside agricultural experts had been assembled at the Department to give advice on the Department's work in the fields of farm management and agricultural economics. Circular No. 132 of the Office of the Secretary constituted their report. They approved cost of production studies, farm life studies, studies in farm organization, farm financial arrangements, farm labor, agricultural history and geography, demonstration work and "land economics (land utilization), involving the consideration of land resources, values, ownership and tenancy, settlement and colonization, and land policies." The Chief of the Office of Farm Management was charged with supervising this work.

Secretary Houston concluded this final report by listing the new agencies and laws that had been set up and passed during his term. The principal items on the list were the Bureau of Markets, the Cooperative Extension Act, the Cotton Futures Act, the Grain Standards Act, the Warehouse



Act, the Federal Aid Road Act, the Federal Reserve Act which authorized new types of rural credit, the Federal Farm Loan Act, and the Vocational Educational Act. He might have added the Bureau of Crop Estimates and the Office of Farm Management.

He felt that a broad survey of rural conditions to be urgently needed. A comprehensive, flexible program should be developed. The work of the many agricultural agencies should be more closely coordinated. But "a program made by any one element would be partial and unsatisfactory. We should have a meeting of minds of all those directly concerned, of farmers, of agricultural leaders, and of businessmen." He urged the President to call a national agricultural conference from which he hoped a permanent rural life commission might result.

The single report submitted by Secretary E. T. Meredith on November 15, 1920, in part concerned Houston's work. Crops were large and farmers not unprosperous. But the market was falling and there was acute shrinkage in values. Farmers were not now getting a fair return, yet they must adjust themselves to drastic changes in world economic conditions. Even in a year of bumper crops the farmer may lose because prices go down. Means must be devised of carrying over to periods of low production the surplus from years of high production -- the germ of the Ever-Normal Granary.

Moreover, a sharp eye must be kept on world conditions. Accurate foreign-market information must be made promptly available to farmers. We read:

Much loose thinking and many wrong conclusions are based on false impressions concerning the profitability of farming. The increase in farm profits during the war was inevitably transitory. Moreover, measured in purchasing power, they shrank rapidly as a result of the rise in general commodity prices.



Acreage had been greatly expanded during the war. But the farmer's business was highly competitive and now wholly disorganized, while farmers lacked effective means to prevent loss of profits. At least it was felt the settlement of new areas should be discouraged. Thus many of the problems that have arisen since World War I were fully foreseen by the remarkable mind of Secretary Houston.

Secretary Meredith in his turn felt it necessary to increase the pay of the Department's scientific and technical workers if the best brains in the country were to be focused on these perplexing farm problems. Improved facilities were also necessary.

Our First World War Secretary of Agriculture was a sort of one-man New Deal all by himself. The record speaks for itself. What he might have done for American agriculture had his work not been interrupted by war it is impossible to say. Certainly he would have succeeded in preventing many acute maladjustments which caught up with farmers a decade or two later and added enormously to their difficulties and perplexities between 1921 and 1933.





